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AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

For a Partnership on Vietnam

THE CONGRESS, in providing \$700 million in military aid for South Vietnam for fiscal 1975 warned the administration not to return for more money this year. Yet the President is now back asking for a \$300 million Vietnam supplemental. Almost no one thinks the whole sum will be forthcoming but a full-blown Executive-Congressional confrontation is in the making. It should not be treated merely as a fight over money. Congress should take the opening posed by the supplemental to try to move South Vietnam away from war. If it believes that the administration's policy points toward an open-ended commitment and a continuing war, it should do what it can to encourage the President to move the other way.

What can it do? The Paris accords, signed two years ago yesterday, anticipated a military cease-fire and a political compromise. The cease-fire never materialized: Vietnamese have been dying since at the rate of 1,000 or more a week. But no progress has been made toward a political settlement either. These elements must be distinguished. It would be wrong, in our judgment, for Congress to enforce a one-sided cease-fire by denying the South Vietnamese adequate means of self-defense. We think it would be quite right, however, for Congress to make a more active effort to promote a political settlement.

Now, if the administration has under way any initiatives aimed at such a settlement, they have not been significant or forceful enough to come to the attention of President Thieu. The American Embassy in Saigon has told American journalists that it is trying to promote a coalition government, but there are no authenticating shrieks from Mr. Thieu, who, despite his acceptance of an agreement which foresees his own removal from the palace, has refused to observe the political sections of that agreement.

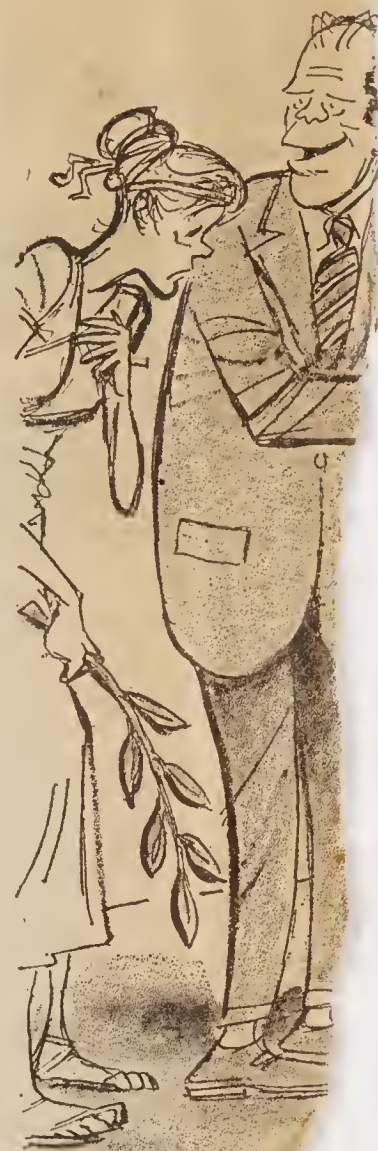
The Congress, however, can take another view. Its proper course was indicated by the language, adopted by both houses in the last foreign aid law, calling on the President to work for a cease-fire, for arms-supply curbs

and for a reconvened Paris conference that would try again for a political settlement. The administration contends the other side is to blame for the failure to achieve these objectives. But in fact it is President Thieu who has resisted them—he fears political competition—and the administration simply has not done what it might to induce him to alter his position. For instance, though warned not to expect more than \$700 million in military aid this year, the administration supplied Mr. Thieu at a rate which let him ignore the warning. Mr. Thieu has indeed made certain political concessions in recent months, but these seem to have been designed not to implement the Paris accords but to show the American Congress he is not an utter tryant. Even so, President Thieu remains adept, we note, at putting his worst foot forward: note the news picture the other day of his police advancing with clubs on unarmed Buddhist demonstrators.

For Congress, the temptation surely is strong to cut off funds and let the Thieu government fall or, perhaps more likely, to provide some additional funds—though not nearly as much as the administration claims is necessary—and to do so without accepting any explicit responsibility for whatever political result may ensue. We continue to believe, however, that the true American interest lies in phasing out the American role in that unhappy country in a way which gives Saigon at least that chance for survival on its own which the United States promised it formally in the Paris peace accords two years ago.

This does not mean supporting Mr. Thieu in a manner which lets him ignore the Paris accords. It means informing him—in the manner in which only a congressional money vote can—that the United States intends to spend its aid funds for the political purposes to which it subscribed in Paris two years ago. Unless the administration is utterly cynical about Vietnam and is prepared to let Mr. Thieu go and to blame his collapse on Congress, then it will accept a partnership of policy with the Congress and it will take this approach to Vietnam.

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The New Hampshire Senate Race

THE SENATE will try to decide today how to handle

because Messrs. Durkin and Wyman disagree or w
should be reviewed. Mr. Durkin is w

President Ford and Members of Congress.

TIME FOR A SECOND LOOK.

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Theory has outstripped practicality. Let's look at it this way. A report of the Bureau of Motor Carrier Safety of the federal Department of Transportation shows that only 1.12 percent of equipment caused accidents involved brakes and brakes are what 121 is all about. Of 1,294 highway deaths involving trucks in the report, only five resulted from brake failures. Out of pocket costs of all accidents, including property damage, public liability and collision insurance are calculated at 450 million dollars for the trucks regulated by the Bureau of Motor Carriers. To say it another way, the cost of insurance for brake accidents is around 5.05 million dollars a year. The cost of the new Brake Standard 121 is going to run an estimated one billion dollars a year and guess who is going to pick up the tab. That's right, the consumer. In plain English, the new rule is going to cost 198 times more than it is worth if it prevents every brake accident from now on. I don't think that passing a rule is going to end all brake accidents to be really frank about it. I wish it were that easy. All costs are passed on, and this will mean a two to four percent general freight increase. CERTAINLY HERE, A REALISTIC SECOND LOOK IS NEEDED.

But most important is the distinct possibility that the new system, which has not been tested in the field, will actually cause more accidents, especially head-on accidents with greater severity (and with possibly more than five fatalities a year) when trucks are thrown over into on-
fic. This needs more